LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH GARNER,NC 2/4/18

The Model of Prayer

In the name…

Let us pray…

So last week Mark told of Jesus gong to a synagogue and teaching and today we have Mark having Jesus go to the home of Simon Peter where his mother in law was sick, and He heals her. Of course, the word gets out of what He has done and more are brought to Him to be healed. And then AFTER that, He goes to a place to pray.

That is different than what we usually think about as to “when to pray”. We have this large prayer list of, at least for me, many people we do not know. And that is okay, we know them by the fact that they need prayers.

So worship assistants determine individually whom or what names they will include, but let it be know we are always uplifting prayers corporately for all those whom we name in our hearts before God.

But even think of that phrase, we make the assumption they NEED prayers. Jesus had a trying day, would not we agree, it is stressful healing and so he went to pray. Now we know our purpose often to pray. It is to lift up petitions of those in need, and the Holy Spirit comes to us in times of need. But we also say the Holy Spirit is with us in our good times as well. What was Jesus’ need here?

We do not know? Mark does not say.

The passage we usually think of when talking of Jesus and prayer are the ones where in Matthew and Luke where Jesus tells the disciples how to pray or gives them an example. And that prayer we call the Lord’s Prayer although it was never named in Scripture Here He goes to solitary place to pray. Other times in Matthew He goes up a mountainside. Or He will go across a lake to prayer. Most times to “get away.” In John’s gospel His prayer is wordy, called the High Priestly prayer, and He is sweating it out as He knows what was to come for Him, suffering and death. And of course, He experiences that right before the fact when He eats His Last Meal with the disciples and then prays alone in the Garden of Gethsemane with one last hopeful shot of another way of having God His Father find a way around that.

But here in Mark and most times in Matthew and instances when Jesus prayed, it is not revealed what or how He prayed. There was no memo sent out answering all those burning questions.

And so I think that leaves it for us to surmise. Was He thanking His heavenly Father for the ability and the continued ability to heal those whom He just healed, again only in the first chapter of Mark? Or maybe He was lamenting the fact He was being stretched thin, I can’t do it all and Father, what out all those in other towns and villages who are hurting as well. Was He asking for backup, I’ve got four, should I call more and train them in the art of healing?

We have prayers which we call prayers of intercession in the latter part of worship. Our assistant does the praying, except the last “wrap up” summary is left to me. That goes back to a long tradition which I have known even as I was growing up. The ordained pastor is THE one who has heard all the prayers and then uses her or his authority to send them up to God, like going to a drive up at a bank, you put your deposit in a tube and send it off to an anonymous person in the bank. Well, the church is no longer saying that is necessary for the Ordained One to be the sender, but I still think it is a good tradition, and we can keep it. I mention that because perhaps Jesus had taken pray requests from the people he healed or spoke to when He was healing and was now sending them up. The people would have thought He already had an IN with God the Father.

I think we can also surmise that He prayed to the people in general who were experiencing injustices at the hands of the Romans, the religious leaders, or any oppressive governments. We can be sure of He prayed for others not Himself. So we can look at Him as a model of prayer for us.

One passage that seldom gets mentioned when it comes to Jesus and prayer is from Hebrews. It summarizes Jesus as One Who prayed.

During the days of Jesus life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the One Who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission.

Jesus prayed in Places apart, mountainsides, lakesides, what about us? Where are our places we pray. We have the sanctuary here, the chapel. One day, it had been inadvertently locked, it should always remain open and available for prayer and meditation. Catherine de Hueck Doherty in her book , “Poustinia” describes the word “poustinia”, it is the Russian word for Desert or wilderness. It is traditional for a Christian in Russia to set aside a room in the house, or a place in the woods for prayer and meditation.

In Matthew 26 Jesus the model of prayer tells us to Watch and Pray”. If we are to be persons of faith then we will be persons of prayer. If we are to be persons of hope and healing in the world, then we will be persons for whom living is praying and praying is living, Jesus is our model of prayer, we have no choice but to pray.

In the name…